



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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IM Weekly Highlights



- Roger Smith restored microwave connectivity at the Jette site on Wed. morning.
- Lewis & Clark County Commissioners signed an MOU with the IM on Thurs. for an e-mail notification server to be used in monitoring and sending out alarms on the microwave network.
- Progress continues on the installation of last-mile hops for the National Guard.
- Brain Sewell worked with Garfield County Sheriff Frank Edwards, on final location of the new Brown Divide site.
- Dave Clouse finalized RFQs for PSIC microwave projects from Lewis & Clark to Gallatin Counties and for the Southwest Ring in Beaverhead and Madison Counties.

IM Funding Sub-Committee Sets Ambitious Schedule

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The IM Funding Sub-Committee held its second meeting in Billings on Wed., Feb. 17 and set an ambitious schedule for itself. The meeting began with a review and prioritization of the numerous suggestions received for sustaining the IM Project that were gathered at 43 outreach meetings held across the state last fall and earlier this year. These comments are summarized in the IM Outreach Report located at this link on the IM webpage: http://interop.mt.gov/content/docs/Outreach_and_Education/IM_2009_Outreach_Report-Full.pdf. Several members took on research assignments to investigate the legality and feasibility of various ideas.

Kyle Hilmer, Policy and Planning Services Bureau, ITSD, reviewed a Business Plan outline, and sub-committee members were assigned to research and write various components of the plan. In addition, they were asked to compile a list of questions and issues that will be addressed to specific IM committees and the board of IM Project Directors. The draft Business Plan needs to be completed in preparation for the Blueprint for Excellence training scheduled for April 21 and 22.

Members are in the process of determining if they can meet in conjunction with the next IM Governance Committee meeting in Helena on Monday, March 8 at

the offices of Anderson ZurMuehlen from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. The next meeting after that is scheduled at 1:00 pm on March 17 at the Billings Police Training Center, 4810 Midland Road.

Columbia Falls Fire Dept./Flathead County Receives Fire Grant

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Columbia Falls Fire Dept., which submitted a FY2009 Regional Communications Grant on behalf of 20 emergency response partners in Flathead County, just learned that the FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters application was awarded \$799,989. The IM and region's matching portion is \$199,997, for a total award of \$999,986. Congratulations!

The award will allow 430 Flathead County firefighters and EMS members to acquire P25 interoperable mobile radios, handheld portable radios, mobile repeater radios, and associated supplies. In addition, Flathead County has committed staff and resources to help implement and manage region-wide radio programming, distribution and training to ensure consistency and interoperability among regional partners.

To read the complete narrative, please visit: http://interop.mt.gov/content/docs/grants/2009_AFG_Regional_Columbia_Falls_Flathead.pdf.

MDT Consortium Preparing to Distribute Units

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

The Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) consortium and Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) are making preparations to distribute more than \$493,000 worth of mobile data computers across Montana. Consortium chair Sheriff Leo Dutton, his staff, PSSB and MDT consortia members are compiling law enforcement needs from agencies across the state to begin a prioritization and distribution list for the units.

PSSB continues to work with the COPS grant program on last-minute funding and procurement approvals. Questions regarding the mobile data computer acquisition process should be directed to Jeanne Walch, Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office, at 406-447-8235 or jwalch@co.lewis-clark.mt.us.

Blueprint for Excellence Planning Session

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Interoperability Montana (IM) is hosting a Blueprint for Excellence strategic planning session at the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) offices in Helena on Wed. and Thurs., April 21 and 22. Please note the new dates.

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This program helps organizations develop improved practices and results using a combination of guided facilitation, tools, training and processes to promote organizational excellence and continuous improvement.

The session will begin with an organization evaluation to produce a report card from which the IM can continuously measure progress and identify areas of strength and weaknesses. Participants will use the tool to evaluate goals, identify the organization's benefits and critical success factors, and develop a detailed action plan with specific steps for how goals will be accomplished. The tool will be used to monitor progress and print reports that make follow up and accountability a reality. The Blueprint methodology will develop the strategy for the planning, build out, implementation of use, partnerships, business practices and sustainability within jurisdictions, neighbors, tribal nations, and state and federal agencies.

The meeting is limited to 30 attendees, most of whom are already selected by virtue of their current roles (i.e. IM Project Directors, MACo Interoperability Committee members, PSSB, SIEC, etc.) Bill Fleiner, Broadwater County DES and IM Governance Committee Chair, is assembling information for participants to review in advance. Irene Bushnell from Anderson ZurMuehlen along with Ian Marquand will facilitate the session.

"This program gives public safety officials a structured process to help them accomplish their strategic planning objectives," Bushnell said.

Participants will identify a common vision, develop a systematic way of measuring progress toward the vision, and enhance quality by standardizing processes, including developing processes for setting and accomplishing strategic and improvement goals as well as accountability processes.

"The first planning process that established IM governance was successful as a result of a partnership with the National Governor's Association through Governor Schweitzer's office," said Fleiner. "Goals and objectives from that first strategic plan were met, and now it is time to carry on towards the successful completion of this project," he said.

I-15/90 Consortium Hears Good News

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Bob McWilliams, IM Technical Committee (IMTC) Chair, informed I-15/90 Corridor Consortium members at their Thurs., Feb. 18 meeting in Butte that Motorola and TX RX Systems—a company that builds combiners for Motorola trunking systems—performed engineering analyses on the recently approved frequencies for the Red Mountain site. A design was approved for a combiner system, and the manufacturing process has begun.

Bob also outlined an aggressive construction schedule that is planned for continued construction of the Southwest Loop as well as work on the XL Heights and Lost Creek sites. Dave Clouse, IM Project Manager, is assembling an RFQ for microwave infrastructure work that is needed for PSIC-funded Investment Justifications 1 and 2 so that equipment can be installed no later than Oct. 1 of this year. Aviat (formerly Harris-Stratex) has been asked for a work plan, too.

Members were brought up to date on recent IMTC decisions and issues, FY2010 DHS grant project ideas, a High-Level Carrier report, and the status of the Rumsey Mountain site. Project Director Dave McPherson informed members that the State Fire Chiefs Association is issuing a position paper on interoperability and the formation of a MACo Interoperability Committee. Wing Spooner, PSSB, reported on Funding Sub-Committee work.

The next I-15/90 meeting is scheduled for Thurs., March 18 at the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce at 10:00 am.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Sun., Feb 21**

MACo Interoperability Committee

Great Falls • 7:00 pm

Best Western Heritage Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Road

- **Mon., Feb. 22**

IM Technical Committee (IMTC)

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.

- **Tues., Feb. 23**

State Agency Radio Users Task Force

Helena • 9:00 am - 11:00 pm

Old Livestock Building, 1310 E. Lockey Ave.

- **Thurs., Feb. 25**

Big Sky 11 Consortium

Billings • 8:30 am – Technical Committee

• 10:00 am – Consortium

Billings Fire Station #1/EOC

2305 8th Ave. North

- **Thurs., March 4**

Northern Tier

Havre • 9:00 am - noon

Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.

- **Mon., March 8**

IM Finance Committee (IMFC)

Helena • 9:00 am - noon

Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

- **Mon., March 8**

IM Governance Committee (IMGC)

Helena • 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

- **Tues., March 9**

IM Project Directors (IMPD)

Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.